

THE

SIXTH ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

Minister at Large in Lowell,

TO THE

LOWELL MISSIONARY SOCIETY.

LOWELL:

B. H. PENHALLOW, PRINTER.

NOVEMBER, 1850.

REPORT.

I present to the Lowell Missionary Association the sixth Annual Report of the Ministry at Large. I do it with gratitude to God for continued favor upon the work of our hands. He has strengthened and cheered our hearts, and conducted to us streams of sympathy and aid, which have made glad our cause, and enabled us to be instruments of further good to our brethren. And we know that his face will always shine upon us, if we ever aim and strive to be faithful "fellow-workers with him."

I have, this year, been blessed with a measure of health, which has enabled me to discharge my duties, almost without interruption.

I have started few new plans of operation, but have continued the old, endeavoring to give to them more life and efficiency, and seeking to modify and extend them, according to the suggestions of experience and expanding ideas of usefulness.

In the required statement of the doings of the year, where they have been the same as the last, and there was enlargement then, there will be brevity now. Some repetition of thought and mode of action there must be, because on certain points, line upon line is needed, to keep up and carry forward the work of charity.

The Evening School was open, the last winter, from the first of November to the first of March. The attendance was never better than the first of the season,—until the fifteenth of January. About this date, the number usually begins to diminish. The increased severity of the weather disposes some to be irregular, and then to withdraw altogether. Long hours of occupation in the mill were assigned as the main cause of absence and withdrawal. The number of scholars registered was one hundred and thirty, males sixty four, females sixty six. The age of the oldest female was fifty-five; of the oldest male, fifty-one. One sixth was over twenty years of age. Four sixths were between fourteen and twenty. This year all but ten were from the mills.

Owing to the crowded state of the school room, an additional room in the basement story was opened, and the sexes arranged in different apartments. The schools were held on the same evening, but the female school was dismissed ten minutes before the male. We have now three apartments occupied; besides those mentioned for young persons, one for adults. In 1849, the male department was reported as having distinguished itself for advancement and good deportment; but, this year, the female made the most progress, while the record shows among them the most absences. The number of scholars in attendance, entirely ignorant of reading and writing, was unusually large. And they were of an age, and, in circumstances, which made it probable that but for the opportunity here afforded, the avenues of intelligence would never have been opened to them. The female school continued under the enlightened and

faithful superintendance of Miss L. E. Penhallow, with thirteen assistants. In the male apartment I had the assistance of four gentlemen. The instruction, it should be remembered, is a free gift, and reflects honor on all those who offer their services as teachers. Where one sacrifices every other engagement, and is present always with aid, there is the most interest and improvement, and the highest credit is due. This valuable assistance we only occasionally obtain, but we ever seek it. While our evening school continues to afford abundant evidence of its great utility, proof is continually coming in to us from more and more of our cities, and more largely from each, of the great wisdom and success of the institution. Several cities near us, as for example, Salem, Roxbury, Worcester and Providence,* and others in remote sections of the country, in their corporate capacity, have aided in the establishment and support of these schools. And it cannot be doubted that if this city should help to establish a number within its limits, the gain of intelligence and morality, in a quarter where it is most needed, would far more than compensate it for any expense incurred.

A course of fifteen lectures was given at the City Hall, last winter. It was an enterprise started and conducted by your minister, with the hope that this plan of intelligence might yet find favor, and that

*In Salem, last winter, the city government made an appropriation of \$300 towards the support of the evening school. In Roxbury, the city Government, last December voted the use of the City Hall four evenings each week, for the Evening School, fitted it for the object, and warmed and lighted it. In Providence, these schools form a part of the school system, are furnished with rooms, and the teachers are paid one half as much as the teachers of the day schools.

some addition might hereby be made to our means of charity. The city gave the use of the Hall. Distinguished gentlemen lectured for less than the usual pay. Some families kindly attended to promote the object. And yet the expenses of the course were but covered. The minds of many of our population, for three years past, have been diverted from ennobling pursuits by the multiplication of amusements, often of a frivolous or questionable character, or of public meetings for a variety of purposes, attended without the exercise of judgment, it may be, or any lofty aim. A revival of desire after profitable knowledge is worthy of our study and exertion. Our satisfaction in this effort is, that we aimed at a high end, and may have done something to maintain the existing current of intellectual inquiry and elevated taste. It may be thought that the foregoing plans went beyond the subjects of our immediate care, but they are included in the designs of the ministry and the chapel.

The Chapel has been a centre of increased interest, and a sun of wholesome influences which has turned much darkness into light. Great is the amount of comfort and quickening power that goes from it in a twelve month. The attendance upon the chapel worship has continued to vary much with the irregularities and changes of the poor, but it has been more uniform, and, during ten months of the year, one third greater than in any corresponding period since the establishment of the service. And this, notwithstanding the existence of another mission, the single object of which is to gather into other churches, and this object has been prosecuted with a commendable

spirit of diligence and earnestness. "The harvest is plenteous, but the laborers are few." The largest audiences have numbered from two hundred and fifty to three hundred. This by no means indicates the number under my charitable care, or under my spiritual, for many more than of any other class of worshippers are always absent, and many individuals cannot be persuaded to attend church any where, and can only be ministered to at their own homes. One of the important influences brought to bear on the hearts of the worshippers, is the music of the choir. It calms the passions, soothes the troubled spirit, awakens devotion, and opens to the rays of divine truth and excellence seeking to enter. More attention has been paid to the singing, and, most of the year, we have been favored with better singing than heretofore. It needs the cultivation of more constant instruction, and the encouragement of means. We should not be dependant altogether on chance free will offerings. The voluntary services of Mr. George Hedrick, on the organ, have been a valuable help to us. To aid the cause of charity, he has nobly refused many earnest solicitations, with pecuniary offers, to play at other churches.

Meetings are now held every Wednesday evening for religious conversation and prayer. Beside, church meetings have been held from the beginning. The Bible class for female adults is still taught with undeviating fidelity by Miss Penhallow. It is well attended, and thankfully receives intelligent and saving instruction. The increased library has been an advantage to them. Many tracts and papers have been distributed among them. And the social interview

has been sought, which has won hearts and knit hearts more happily together in the way of righteousness. I am ashamed to state that no teacher has been obtained for the class of male adults.

The children, gathered into the chapel, have been the field the most assiduously cultivated, and with the greatest variety of methods, which have furnished, and promise, the largest results. A large number of children have been enrolled as scholars in the Sunday School, and there has been a fuller and more uniform attendance. The number of scholars in the school on the first of April was one hundred and fifty four, and what is very unusual, as many boys as girls. The number on the first of August, generally as low as seventy, was one hundred and forty, with an attendance of one hundred. More than one half were boys. All the teachers in this school for two years have been females. They have been more successful in the instruction and government of the boys than the male teachers of previous years. The miscellaneous and religious libraries of the school have been more read, and the books better kept. Cards with pithy words on the vices and virtues of life have been distributed by hundreds in the school, and have often been found at the homes of the children, hanging framed, or carefully preserved in drawers — respected warnings and counsellors of wisdom. Juvenile papers by the thousand have been circulated among the scholars, and they have been much read by the parents, constituting the only reading which some have time, inclination or cultivation, to take up. Social assemblings of the children, at an early hour of the evening, were held about once a fortnight during the

winter and spring. Conversation, instruction in innocent amusements, singing, with now an inculcation of profitable information, and then a moral address, combined, proved a highly successful experiment in the formation of character and manners, and in the attempt to teach early the mind, by happy experience, the difference between sensual pleasure and pure social improving enjoyment. A frequent eye witness wrote to a distant friend, "I could not have imagined that a hundred or more of such undisciplined spirits, as I knew them to have been, could have been subdued to such entire decorum and propriety, and that they could enter into a large variety of amusements without any clashing, and with such hearty enjoyment and good feeling." Very simple means at a simple age may accomplish mightier results than the most powerful appliances and efforts against fixed habits. Do not the poor need to have the door of happy experiences and elevating refining influences opened to them, to raise them above the power of low temptation and the misery of sin? Farther, in the summer the children have been assembled to see the wonders the microscope reveals. And when insect life has departed, and the flowers are gone, at the time of the harvest moon, a new avenue of intelligence has been opened to them by the eye directed to the telescope. This we have owed to the kindness of Mr. W. Wickersham. The autumn also brought on a fruit festival. A few friends of the poor furnished a bountiful supply. There was a rare enjoyment of the good things of Providence. And occasion was taken to set forth the lines and principles of fruit

property, and enforce the commandment not to steal. A deeper interest and effect never came to the children of the Chapel from words against theft. In this connection, I will mention a circumstance not unworthy of record. Four years ago, when the chapel grounds were laid out, I was earnestly remonstrated with for attempting the cultivation of flowers in so open and exposed a situation, when so many pilferers were abroad, so many untrained children would be under my care, and three public schools were within thirty feet of the chapel. It is a remarkable fact that we never lose a flower. The children are defenders of our rights, and seem to hallow the spot from which emanate so many kind purposes toward them. A sewing school for poor children was held during the four winter months, which was well attended by many not connected with the Sunday School, and of foreign parentage. Most gratifying improvement was witnessed in skill of hand, cleanliness, disposition and manners. A singing school was also furnished for the benefit of the scholars in the Sunday School. The Christmas service for the school, last December, was attended by a large audience. The Charity Feast had one third more contributors than in the year previous, and the presents to the young were much more numerous. The Floral Fair on the Fourth of July received liberal contributions from other towns in the county, and more ready and generous patronage, than heretofore, from the citizens. Thus much has been done for the children. And, it is impossible that all this could be done, without a gain to the city in its present and future interests, without the prevention

of the fall of many and the elevation of some. In this direction it is emphatically true, for we see and know, “that our labor is not in vain in the Lord.”

The office of the chapel has been open from eight to nine in the forenoon, and from four to five in the afternoon. In the winter season, it was found necessary, in general, to prolong these hours. The record book shows the number of calls, the past year, to have been about twelve hundred. Rather more than one half of the number were made by foreigners. Nearly two-thirds of these were Catholic Irish. Nearly one third Protestant Irish. The most numerous applications, in the order of frequency, were for employment, clothes, food, wood, advice, means to leave the city, and a physician and comforts for sickness. There was also a coming for every conceivable purpose, to consult me about a little property, to commit to my charge a little money, to ask me to write letters to kindred and friends, to get tenements, obtain nurses, to take the pledge, to procure school books, to secure lodging, and beg for straw to lie on. Impostors and confirmed beggars have been shy of me. They generally keep far off. They do not want to be known. They can drive a better business at the doors of houses, than at the door of my office. This office is a great blessing to the poor,—a refuge, a shelter, food, warmth, support and encouragement. Many a wound has been healed, many a heart wrung at the recital of its woes, many a tear dropped there, and from thence many gone with a smile and thanks. It has often been the only light and friend of the stranger. It has been frequently said, “I do not know what I should have done without it.” “There

ought to be such a place in every city." The office is open all Wednesday afternoon, every week, for dispensing clothes. Hundreds of garments have been distributed. Unusually large quantities have been received. One poor woman sent to the clothing room seventeen garments, which her own hands made for those poorer, after her days' toil was ended! This fact is a volume to her credit, and for our instruction. From some ladies at Pawtucket Falls, fast friends to this charity, we have obtained another large supply of children's clothing, which we always need. Flannels and bed clothes for the winter season are articles very much in demand, and our room is entirely destitute of them at present. The many calls at the office are equal to so many visits made.

The number of visits made by me to the houses of the poor amount to fifteen hundred, beside a number made for me by a lady connected with the chapel. Whole number of visits, since the commencement of the ministry, about ten thousand. A private daily record of the visits has been kept, and some of them sketched into much detail. Were it wise to make them public, not a few revelations would be startling, shocking, and melting to the hardest heart of stone, while many scenes of self sacrifice and struggle with adversity, would fill some of the best pages of man as a noble being. There is much knowledge of individuals and families locked up in my bosom, which it would be neither prudence, delicacy, a faithful regard to other's rights, nor for the final good of the public to make known. I, often, openly tell what ought not to be secret, but, often, again, when importuned to give information, I resolutely refuse to make the least

disclosure, for when freely admitted to homes and bosoms, there is a trust, under many circumstances, not to be abused, and what is heard in the ear is not to be told upon the housetop.

The last winter was a very favorable one for the poor. The mildness of the weather and the unusual health of the season diminished the number of sufferers from cold and disease. The summer, just closed, has also been distinguished for remarkable health among the poorer and all classes. But, still, the year has been a more pinching one to the poor than I have heretofore known. The crippled business of the place has cut off so many from regular employment, and job work has so much fallen off, that many, never before straitened, have been unable sometimes to procure their daily bread, and others very poor have never known what poverty was before. As this has not been the usual cause of poverty with us, it has not been sufficiently considered. And it has not affected the sensibilities of the employed, like those causes which enter into one's personal experience. Consequently, I have not had the means to afford relief, that has been furnished to less indigence. In the winter and early spring, I was very much cramped for the want of money to supply urgent necessities. I was obliged cautiously to incur debt. This, amounting to nearly an hundred dollars, was liquidated by the proceeds of the Fair, on the Fourth of July. While the same cause continues to operate, may it be borne in mind, and money more frequently be slipped into my hand for the unfortunate.

During the winter season, the poor must remain

where they are, but, during the summer, they can go from place to place, to obtain work. We have, therefore, made it a strong point to satisfy strangers, and others needing employment, that it was not to be procured here, that more and more daily were thrown out of work, and that it was absolutely necessary to go to some other than a manufacturing city, if one would be saved from hopeless destitution and misery. Many have been induced to leave the city, who, if they had remained, would have required hundreds of dollars, from one or more sources of charity, to have carried them through the winter. It has not been an object to shift a burthen on to the shoulders of others, but to persuade the unemployed to seek, where they would be most sure to find, the worthy object of their desire. I have furnished some with the means, and shown others how they might obtain them, to go to their friends or to cities in a more thriving condition, that they might, if possible, establish themselves in work before stern winter should be upon them. This foresight must be acknowledged the most economical and the highest charity, especially when we consider that dependence, fraud, degradation and the vices, are the close attendants of an unemployed condition. Our words to "go from the city," have been earnest and incessant,—strangely so to many,—and we have even felt obliged to drive some out, but we believe that we have performed a good office for our brethren and the city. Indeed, we know we have, in some cases, according to the reports that reach us from a distance. We rejoice with the employed. For sweet is the sleep of toil, but sleepless misery is the uncertainty of food and a resting place.

To prevent a resort to begging for subsistence, is all desirable. Begging from door to door is the destruction of many an individual and many a family. Self reliance and self respect die down in the bosom, a dependence on chance favors and what can possibly be obtained by exaggerated statements and strong appeal enters the bosom with seven other spirits, indolence and irregularity of habit overcome and break up the man,—the door of satisfaction from honest industry is closed, the door of low pleasure from the indulgence of stimulated thirst or lust is thrown open,— degraded and desperate, the friends of charity one after another wearying of importunity, new friends are sought on the ground of miserable poverty now really existing,—lies are resorted to where they can effect, and theft whenever it may succeed, debts are contracted from every possible quarter, piled heap upon heap, bringing with them snares and stings, reproaches and damning denunciation,— the living is now sought in any way, no matter how,—the parent is now only to be found in his stolen den or in some miserable haunt of wickedness, the children become the principal supporters of the family, have the reins in their own hands, grow up in dependence and vice, at ten or fourteen are thieves or prostitutes, while the parents die an early death, buried by the city, and the children are thrown upon the community an offense, expense and corruption, as long as they live. Such is the result, which I have, not unfrequently, seen and traced from the beginning, in the short period of five years. It does not take long to go down hill. Who is the cause of this downfall, and the dashing of these little ones against the stones

of sin? I am sorry to say: but it is those who give at their doors without knowing to whom they give.

As a general thing, charity at the door, I am happy to say, is working down out of the intelligent and wealthier classes, to a final doom, I hope. For we have causes of abject poverty enough without this being added. And a happy day will it be for the city, when a wise and well regulated system of charity, availing itself of the experience of the past, and looking carefully at effects in the future, shall prevail over the blind action of undisciplined sensibilities. Then will it cease to be said, that "charity creates much of the misery it relieves," and to be added, that "it does not relieve all the misery it creates." There was an unusual number of beggars about the city, the last winter. But their rounds were principally confined to certain streets, because there they were encouraged to come often, for food and money. In other streets, the citizens better informed on this subject, declined assisting in this way, and referred them to those to whom the business of pauperism is committed.

Some object to the abandonment of the old method of alms-giving, because they cannot bear to turn away a sufferer cold and hungry from the door. The beggar is supposed to be, from his own word, a real and necessary sufferer, which is a matter of question.* And if he is a true sufferer, his wants will be attended to at the office of charity and at his own home, in a way that knowledge and experience

*In one of our cities, lately, a determination was taken by the Overseers of the Poor, to investigate deeply and fairly the claims of those who were applicants for its aid, and it was found that four fifths should not receive it.

has proved most fitting. If the case of the sufferer is one likely to make large demands, and the private purse or the poor's purse of the ministry with private aid cannot meet the expenditure, the city would be called upon to furnish support, and are obliged by law to extend full comfort and subsistence. So that with the existing arrangements, no one denied at the door, has occasion to suffer, starve, freeze, or die from abandonment. There is a door, which always stands open, for the poor to go in and out, and find the needed food and raiment, and the 'one thing needful.'

If a beggar is sent to me, he may not come to me, because he prefers darkness rather than light, and may work to more advantage among those ignorant of arts and impositions. But if he does come, he may go away complaining that he does not receive that which he craved, but which was not his greatest need,—instead of bread, a cheering word, counsel, or it may be, a reproof. Perhaps I deem it advisable for him to go to the Poor Farm for a season,—which I never recommend, unless it clearly appears to me to be for the highest good of the man. He may resist the proposition. And yet a better plan, perhaps, could not be proposed. His temporal necessities will be met without anxiety. If sick, he will have comforts and a physician; if intemperate, he will have cold water; if filthy, he will be made clean; if lazy, he will be obliged to work. On the Sabbath, he will have opportunity of worship, which he must attend. Having children, they will be separated from any evil influence of the parent, and instead of the instruction of the streets will receive that regularly of the day school certain hours, and certain

hours that of invigorating and useful labor. Beside, the Sunday School instruction will be stately given, the voice brought out in song, and the heart taught to pray to the Father in Heaven. Some of the vacant hours will be filled with reading from a Juvenile Library, adapted to the simplest minds. A residence for a while, at the Poor Farm, may not be desired, and may be combated, but I think it has been a great advantage to many individuals and families, and I know of hundreds who would be greatly benefited by an abode there for a season. In the discipline there, there ought to be found kindness, sympathy and a due regard to the rights and capabilities of all, but not a whit less decision and efficiency, than now control the establishment, to the honor of those at its head and the guardians of the public interests. In many cases, after a full understanding of the circumstances, and after careful deliberation and consultation with the city authorities, the judgment has been passed, that an individual with his family, entirely dependent on the public, and likely to be, should go to the Poor Farm; but, a perfectly clear decision for their certain good, has been set aside to their certain injury and ruin, by those who will deal out at their doors small portions of food and small sums of money, to "keep them along" in wretched abodes and destructive suffering, and it may be, in the most polluting and corrupting habits. The judgment is not supported for lack of knowledge, and often because the mercy in the bosom is weak and short-sighted. It is very much like a weak mother, setting aside the medicine of the physician, instead of encouraging the child to take, increasing its reluc-

tance, letting the disease work its results unchecked, and the child look upon the doctor as its enemy, rather than find him his intelligent friend. Emboldened by the readiness of those who make a practice of giving alms at their doors, and by their assurances sometimes, some set at defiance our decision, and say "they know they can find those that *will* help them," that is, in truth, to a condition of greater dependence and degradation. The city and the ministry find themselves brought to a full stop in their efforts for the highest good of the individual and the public good. We feel grieved. More, we solemnly protest against the practice of which we are strongly complaining. More, I wish to ask most seriously, whether, under present arrangements, there exists a reason, why the law of the State should not be put in force, which prohibits begging about the streets? If the present arrangements are not what they ought to be, then let them be made such.

Many, with true benevolence of heart, wish the gratification of ministering themselves to the poor. Then I would say, visit much, see closely, and aim to act wisely. Many excellent ladies wish to be directly useful. Let there be no hindrance, but every encouragement. Great is the capacity or fitness of the female mind to do well the work of charity. A female has by nature admirable qualifications, if she will only make the work a study, penetrate and observe the workings of human nature, obtain full and exact information before action, acquire some experience as to the best methods of the distribution of bounty, consider the remote as well as immediate bearing of deed, give time, give the importance due

to spiritual need in connection with temporal, and bring faith and principle to bear on the sufferer and wanderer, who wants where to lay his head. Any one is capable of doing this. One so trained and moulded, may freely give, and go freely forth on errands of mercy. No one then would regret that

“ She hath a tear for pity,
“ And a hand, open as day, for melting charity.”

Such an one with me in my daily walks, more tender and gentle, having more ready access to female wants, and alone suited to many emergencies, would greatly increase the usefulness of this ministry. On the other hand, when I see a lady, at the door and in the streets, taking counsel only of her feelings, her sympathies excited by the exaggerated tale, and the false history of life moving to tears, when I see the ear taking in the stories of others' hardness of heart and the compliments of *their* reputation for benevolence, and overcome by the hollow invocation of heaven's richest blessings, and see the ignorance of human nature, and the money and apparel generously given to imposition and base flattery, I cannot but wish that I was behind the veil, and had the control of so much mercy. It should not be poured out like water, spent and wasted, but like our own river be dammed up, and led round, and let out, where and when, it will accomplish the most profitable results. But it may be said, that few ladies have time to act as missionaries or fit themselves to be almoners. Still let no sensibility be chilled. There is other work than that of investigation and the distribution of the necessaries of life, which may, in general, be left to

well considered system, and the wisdom of knowledge and experience. One or more families may be selected from the mass of poor, with an especial reference to making them comfortable, teaching them self dependence, inspiring them with self respect, and elevating them in knowledge and virtue. No more ground should be occupied than can be thoroughly cared for. With these families, and with all the poor, there is always a want of sympathy, counsel, faithful advice, encouragement, and small attentions, which are great relief. There are many modes of charity. Some of them are indicated in the following extracts from the annals of benevolence. Lady Burleigh, of England, "did yearly provide wool and flax, and did distribute it to poor women in Chestnut parish, willing them to work the same into yarn, and bring it to her to see the manner of working; and for the most part she gave them the stuff, by way of alms." Lady Apsley, "if any were sick, made them broths with her own hands, visited and took care of them, and provided them with necessaries: if any were afflicted, she comforted them." Her reflections must have been in the words of Shakspeare,

"My pity has been balm to heal their wounds,
My mildness hath assuaged their swelling griefs,
My mercy dried their water swelling tears."

To be directly serviceable to the poor should be the first aim. But, indirectly, much good may be done by supplying "the barrel of meal and the cruse of oil" in the hands of those devoted to the work, that they "fail not."

The heart, cherishing the spirit to do good, will find abundant occasion and method. There need to

be added only — thought and perseverance. As has been truly said,—“ That charity will prove foolish, which lacks thought and continuity of purpose. To be sure of being wisely charitable, you must begin by giving a great deal of thought,—a generosity of the rarest kind. Then beside giving thought, you have to continue steady in purpose, when the novelty of the purpose has worn off.”

If the thought of the community were aroused and employed upon another subject of poverty, I think the condition of the poor would be greatly improved. I refer to their habitations. Who will deny that upon a comfortable, convenient, pleasant home or house to live in, depends materially, the concord, cleanliness, health, good morals, and genuine respectability of a family? How can a family rise? How many would sink into indifference, peevishness, sluttishness, and looseness of morals, if obliged to live where many do,—in a narrow lane, which the cupidity of landlords, robbed of any claim to humanity, has crowded in front and rear with houses, separated only by a narrow alley, in one only of a dozen or twenty small rooms, filled with six or eight each, no conveniences at all, repairs seldom or never made, obliged to fight for the rain water that comes off the roof or go without it, in a yard large enough for one, all to hang the clothes, compelled to take the wood into the room, and this the place to sleep, cook, wash, and be sick in, and the entry the resort of all sorts of children, some of the neighbors, too, making the house to resound with boisterous noise nearly all night;—no wonder that pale faces, sickness, great mortality, dirt, immorality, abound, that the children love the streets,

that husbands shun their homes, except when they eat and sleep, and that the mother is as cross as she can live: for all this, too, paying a higher rent, for the room occupied, than is paid for the best house in the city! Attention has been called, in other cities, to the miserable houses of the poor, and the exorbitant rates demanded for crowded, narrow, damp, foul rooms or cellars,—the rent of which is avoided, when it can be. Humane capitalists in London, Liverpool, Boston, Salem and elsewhere, have erected buildings expressly for the poor, with every comfort and convenience, dry, well ventilated, furnished sometimes with a bath room, and a small library,—spirituous liquors by the regulations excluded, and an arrangement made for daily religious exercises for those who choose to attend,—and all afforded for a less sum than before paid for the worst abodes. The rent, which was before avoided, is now cheerfully paid. I have no doubt that there is a better ability to pay. Now the dispositions may be content and equable, the faces bright with smiles, flowers appear at the windows, and the reign of taste and beauty dawn. The family is new made. This is indeed a philanthropy of the highest order, involving no gift of money or risk, which must extend itself, as soon as its great importance is known and appreciated. A happy day will it be for Lowell, when it shall stir itself among us. For I have frequently known families move away from darkness, damp and dirt, and become entirely altered, physically and morally. I have known, too, many come from the country into such quarters, respectable families, shocked at first, by a seeming necessity conforming to the destiny of the poor, and

falling to the surrounding level of degradation and vice. Happy would have been the lot of Lowell, if this new city had escaped the evil of older cities; if a city ordinance had forbidden the crowding of buildings so thickly together, to the detriment of the public health and morals.

But, towering above all other subjects, in importance still stands the temperance cause. Intemperance is still the source of a great portion of the poverty, crime, tax, trouble, tears and anxiety of the city. The ignominious sale still goes on. During the last year, "Father Matthew," with the weight of his office and reputation, visited us. And some strong and zealous words from other lips stirred the dead sentiment and feeling of the public. After the moving of the waters, some stepped in and were saved. A few shops were closed. The pledge was signed anew, and for the first time by here and there one. Great efforts have been made by sincere friends, and not in vain. But still things remain much the same. The scales have not yet fallen from the eyes of the public generally. And I fear we have not laid the axe at the root of the tree yet. The resolution of a pledge is good. And the civil law is good, better, if under circumstances to make it effectual. But is intemperance treated singly enough as a personal sin of the deepest dye? Is there, in general, an attempt to produce that broken and contrite heart which is the first hope of reform? Is there an understanding, conviction, and obligation, worked thoroughly into the minds of the people, of young men and children, that there are appetites and lusts of the flesh to be denied, regulated and governed according

to the teaching of reason and of Jesus, and the command of God? Should a child go from under the roof of a parent, from a public school into business and temptation, and young men and adults sit in a church, without being thoroughly instructed on this point, with reference to a victory over this evil? The united voices of clergymen, teachers, parents, and all good men, could effect more by religion brought to bear directly on the life, than by any pledge or code of man's making, or through these, indirectly. For God made man, gave the law to his members, and his is the authority, which no one can resist, with impunity.

Upon one other subject of great importance, I beg leave to say a word,—our youth. I have seen it stated in an English paper, that “it is found from the criminal tables of Mr. Redgrave, of the Home Office, that while youths, from fifteen to twenty-five years of age, constitute only one tenth of the population, they actually commit one fourth of all the crime of the country.” The young of this age, and even of a tenderer age, are, in the new as well as in the old world, subjects of anxious concern. A good effect has been produced in this city, upon many disposed to err, by the sending of a few to the House of Reformation. A bad effect has been produced upon the character of those sent to the common jail, and they have become, in not a few cases, missionaries of the corruption received from their imprisoned elders. And I would remark, in passing, that a new jail, admitting of different arrangements, and subject to *stricter* regulations, higher moral management and

religious influences, is, in the opinion of many qualified to judge, most loudly called for. Much is done for our youth in our Sunday Schools. But are they, early, well informed of the precise dangers and temptations that await them from their own appetites and passions, and those of companions, and from the arts and enticements of wickedness in general? And is the Scripture word fitted to the point of attack, stationed as a sentinel in the soul to meet it, like as in the Saviour's mind in the scene of his temptations? From the last hours of a distinguished scholar, whose life has just paid the forfeit of life taken, we learn a lesson that should not be lost. He marked, it is said, in his Bible, the passages referring to early dissipation, and condemnatory of his early life. What if a kind hand had done this for him in his early days, and christian lips had charged his memory and conscience with the application of the truth, or this had been a habit of mind formed in the beginning of days, what a record the world might have been spared! Beyond the ages found in a Sunday School, we have many young men in this city, say between fifteen and twenty-five, many operatives and mechanics, who are the greatest delinquents of any class in attendance upon the sanctuary, and whose characters, in the absence of direct moral and religious restraint, are exposed to great danger. It deserves our serious consideration what may be done to engage them in the work of self-improvement and spiritual advancement. Other topics crowd, but I forbear.

I would only add, that the Ministry at Large, in other places, has been successfully pursued, this last

year, and in all, there has been an evident increase of interest in sustaining and extending it. In the only place in New England in which it has been suspended, in Charlestown, it has been revived, and placed under the charge of the Rev. O. C. Everett. A Ministry at Large has been newly established in Roxbury. Another in Buffalo. In Portland and Roxbury, simultaneously, a good paper is now published, entitled "The Assistant to the Ministry at Large." An Association has been formed of the Ministers at Large, in New England,—the preliminary meeting to which was held in this city in July,—the meetings to be quarterly, and passed in the consideration and discussion of important subjects connected with poverty. From these facts, it may be inferred, that the cause in which we are embarked is having, and will have, an onward progress.

I thank the members of this Association, and the public generally, for their considerate, and, often, generous regard, manifested toward the objects of this ministry, another year. An offered reduction in most of the purchases for the poor, and many small gifts from various sources, have lengthened out the means at command for doing good. Since the commencement of my labors I have studiously avoided calling often upon the public for means for different objects, and I have seldom asked favors of friends, that I might not come to be regarded as a beggar, and because voluntary contributions are more pleasant and satisfactory, and an institution intended for permanence ought not to weary with importunity. The office book shows the receipts in money for the Poor's

Purse, the last year, to have been three hundred and forty-one dollars, ninety-one cents. Sixty-four dollars were received by contribution from the religious society which was the origin and is the spring of the Ministry; one hundred and fifty dollars were the net proceeds of the Fair on the Fourth of July; one hundred and twenty-seven dollars came from different quarters. The book exhibits the expenditures to October first, three hundred thirty-two dollars eighty-five cents,—leaving, at that time, nine dollars and six cents in the Treasury. There have been times, during the year, particularly in the winter season, when I should have been glad of more money to carry on the Ministry well, as it is at present arranged. There are other objects to accomplish beside the present. And the operations and usefulness of the Ministry might be much extended. Moreover, the burthen (if it should so be called) of the expense might, reasonably, be made somewhat lighter, than it is at present, on some shoulders, cheerfully willing while it is necessary. It is to be hoped and prayed for that this institution will stand and commend itself for its wisdom and works, and attract towards it, from time to time, benefactions and legacies from the wealthy and benevolent. If worthy of them, we may trust that we shall be cared for. “In due time we shall reap, if we faint not.”

A season is advancing, which will, no doubt, bring far more suffering to the poor of Lowell, than any which has preceded it. Many, never poor before, will require assistance, the gates of work closed against them. Every family and individual, of whom

we have knowledge, likely to come to want, we are urging to go into the country, to their friends, or to some other city — with some success. We hope that the people will not encourage any to remain, by giving at their doors. There will be many so situated as not to be able to leave. There will be the worthy and temporarily poor, who ought not to be forced to go to the Poor Farm, and to whom the proposal would be as much of an insult, as to the best of us, if unfortunate. I implore you, be ready to feel for the poor. If you expect me to look after them, and see that their urgent need is supplied, think that I cannot say, “Depart in peace: be ye warmed and filled, and give them not.” If you have God’s bounty, “freely ye have received, freely give.” If you are straitened in your luxuries, think what it is to be straitened in the necessaries of life. If you have a whole loaf of bread, I will only say that I have known a poor person, who had nothing else, give half of it to the neighbor who had none. Early and late, remember the Poor’s Purse. I do not wish in person, to apply to you for charity. But if I should find a necessity, I hope you will graciously excuse the application, or rather thank me for it.

The Ministry closes its sixth year. After the Annual Meeting of the Missionary Association in July, it was publicly declared that “it never was so prosperous in all its relations.” This is the fruit of great exertion. Is not the object worthy of a continuance of the same? And is not the work of our hands such, that we may pray to God, nothing doubting, “the work of our hands, establish thou it!”

Let us, then, renew our vows of charity at the altar, and for the coming year, "vow and pay unto the Lord our God." And if we labor in a good cause, may we not have the warm sympathy and liberal aid of all good citizens? We will rely upon it.

Respectfully submitted.

Nov. 3, 1850.

H. WOOD.

